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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6134
INFO RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0459
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0557
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 1371
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2156
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0710
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0472
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1492
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0735
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 2096
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 000383

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: BBC RESUMES LOCAL KINYARWANDA BROADCASTS

REF: A. KIGALI 328
[1](#)B. KIGALI 302

Classified By: Ambassador Symington for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (U) On June 24, the Government of Rwanda (GOR) rescinded its April ban on the BBC's local FM Kinyarwanda broadcasts (which use GOR transmission facilities). The Rwandan cabinet had formally agreed on June 19 to allow resumption of broadcasts, following Information Minister Louise Mushikiwabo's report of "successful" consultations. A BBC team came to Rwanda in late May to discuss the broadcast cutoff (reftel A), and the parties exchanged correspondence on the cutoff and steps forward (not shared with the US embassy). Several hours in advance of the resumption, Mushikiwabo spoke to local press outlets to announce the resumption, claiming the BBC had agreed to change its editorial policy on Kinyarwanda programming, and the GOR was pleased with this concession. (Note: In April Mushikiwabo had accused the BBC of mounting broadcasts that either denied the 1994 genocide, or promoted "divisionism" in Rwandan society --see reftel B. End Note).

[1](#)2. (C) Sources at the British Embassy and the local BBC office deny to us, as they have in the past, any agreement by BBC to change its editorial line. Both have also stoutly denied publicly and privately any sort of genocide denial or infringement of Rwandan social peace in BBC broadcasts. They note BBC reaffirmed its commitment to balanced and accurate reporting in its meetings with Mushikiwabo. They also conveyed offers to meet with Rwandan officials at BBC studios in London, and to receive Rwandan interns.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment. Having banned broadcasts for two months, Mushikiwabo apparently felt compelled to claim BBC concessions for domestic political consumption. As noted reftel A, the BBC has decided that the better part of editorial valor on its part is to ignore her assertions of editorial changes and genocide denial, and simply welcome the resumption of broadcasts. End Comment.

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